

# HELP WANTED:

Highlights from the  
Second Quarter, 2004  
Louisiana Job Vacancy Survey

Alexandria Regional Findings

Louisiana Department of Labor  
Developed by the Research & Statistics Division  
for the Office of Workforce Development



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# WHERE are the vacancies?

## Alexandria Vacancies by Occupational Group

Occupational Group	Number of Vacancies	Employment in Occupation	Percent Requiring More than a High School Diploma	Percent Requiring at Least Some Work Experience	Median Hourly Wage Offered
Food Preparation & Serving Related	427	8,160	6.15%	49.24%	\$5.15
Transportation & Material Moving	393	6,800	0.00%	30.20%	\$5.35
Sales & Related	380	9,300	0.92%	83.54%	\$5.20
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	194	7,080	100.00%	53.68%	\$17.30
Management	174	5,390	100.00%	100.00%	\$13.28
Construction & Extraction	113	5,790	56.43%	100.00%	\$16.50
Production	111	4,660	20.36%	91.31%	\$6.00
Healthcare Support	82	3,580	62.31%	28.27%	\$5.75
Personal Care & Service	72	3,690	0.00%	36.34%	\$5.50
Office & Administrative Support	71	14,800	0.00%	93.21%	\$11.26
Building & Grounds Cleaning Maintenance	56	3,480	0.00%	100.00%	\$5.15
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	55	4,230	0.00%	90.15%	\$14.00
Protective Service	45	4,430	0.00%	68.87%	\$7.50
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	35	570	95.06%	95.06%	\$10.00
Architecture & Engineering	34	1,240	100.00%	92.46%	\$24.04
Legal	32	660	100.00%	100.00%	\$10.93
Business & Financial Operations	8	2,060	100.00%	100.00%	\$18.27
Non-Classifiable Operations	5	NA	100.00%	100.00%	\$21.15
Community & Social Services	0	1,640	NA	NA	NA
Computer & Mathematical Science	0	540	NA	NA	NA
Education, Training & Library	0	7,280	NA	NA	NA
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	0	1,570	NA	NA	NA
Life, Physical & Social Science	0	610	NA	NA	NA
<b>Total, All Occupational Groups</b>	<b>2,290</b>	<b>97,560</b>	<b>28.38%</b>	<b>65.63%</b>	<b>\$5.50</b>

## Job titles with many openings

Cashiers (377 openings)  
 Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers (285)  
 Waiters & Waitresses (158)  
 Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers (155)  
 Truck Drivers (Heavy & Tractor Trailer) (109)  
 Nursing Aides, Orderlies & Attendants (74)  
 Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters (64)  
 Fast Food Cooks (62)  
 Sales Managers (62)  
 First-Line Managers of Food Preparation & Serving Workers (63)

## Alexandria Vacancies by Industry Group

Industry Group	Number of Vacancies	Industry Employment	Vacancy Rate	Median Hourly Wage Offered
Leisure & Hospitality	691	8,780	7.87%	\$5.15
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	686	19,801	3.46%	\$5.35
Education & Health Services	325	32,090	1.01%	\$8.38
Construction	138	6,339	2.18%	\$11.00
Other Services	128	2,290	5.59%	\$11.54
Financial Activities	106	4,080	2.60%	\$13.28
Professional & Business Services	100	7,182	1.39%	\$10.93
Manufacturing	56	5,405	1.04%	\$14.13
Natural Resources & Mining	51	2,860	1.78%	\$10.50
Information	9	1,611	0.56%	\$11.53
<b>Total, All Industry Groups</b>	<b>2,290</b>	<b>90,438</b>	<b>2.53%</b>	<b>\$5.50</b>

## WHAT do these numbers mean ?

There were a total of 2,290 reported vacancies in the Alexandria Regional Labor Market Area (RLMA), for a vacancy rate of 2.53 percent -- meaning that for every 100 jobs, approximately three were vacant at the time of the survey. Food Preparation & Serving Related occupations had the most vacancies, making up nearly one in five vacancies in the Alexandria RLMA. Within this broad occupational group, several different food service jobs had large numbers of openings.

Education and experience requirements varied widely across occupational groups. For example, *all* reported openings in Management occupations required more than a high school diploma and some previous work experience. By contrast, Transportation & Material Moving occupations required little education and experience: *none* of these openings required education past high school, and only about 30 percent required any previous work experience. Wages varied by occupation, as well. While the median hourly wage offered across all occupations was \$5.50, wages ranged from \$5.15 per hour in Food Preparation & Serving Related and Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance to \$24.04 in Architecture & Engineering occupations.

The table above shows Alexandria vacancies by industry group. (See the sidebar on page 5 of this report for more on the differences between *industries* and *occupations*.) Leisure & Hospitality had the most reported vacancies at 691, but Trade, Transportation & Utilities was a close second at 686. Combined, these two industries made up over half of the vacancies in the Alexandria area. Vacancies in both of these industries were low paying: the median hourly wage offered was \$5.15 in Leisure & Hospitality and \$5.35 in Trade, Transportation & Utilities.

# A SNAPSHOT

## of Alexandria job vacancies

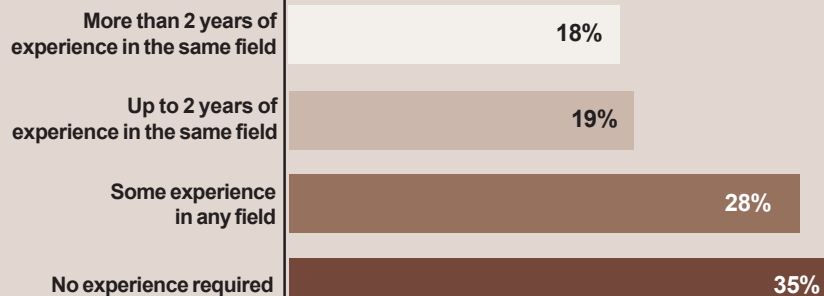
Overall, Alexandria RLMA employers were seeking experienced workers. Two thirds of all reported vacancies required at least some previous work experience. Twenty-eight percent of vacancies required some experience in any field; another 19 percent required up to two years of experience in the same field, and 18 percent required over two years of experience in the same field.

Educational requirements were a different story, however. Just 12 percent of Alexandria's vacancies required a four-year college degree or higher. Eight percent required a bachelor's degree, while four percent required an advanced degree. The sidebar to the left provides more information on education levels in job vacancies.

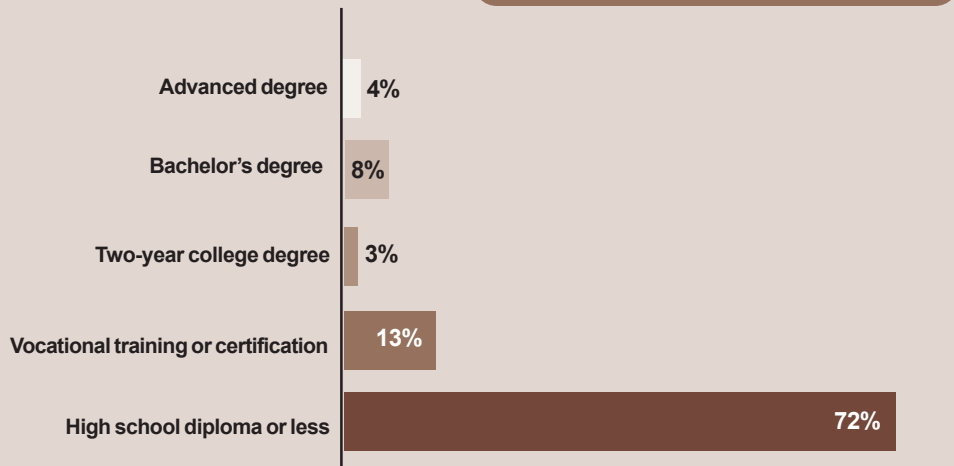
### Why do most vacancies require a high school diploma or less?

The picture painted by these figures may look grim, but there is a good reason why most vacancies require little education. Simply put, occupations that require less education tend to have more turnover, all else equal. The latest estimate by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for median years of job tenure for professional and managerial workers was 4.8 in 2002. By contrast, sales workers, such as retail sales clerks, stayed a median 2.7 years and service workers, such as food service employees, stayed a median 2.4 years. Since retail sales clerks, food service workers, and other such jobs have high turnover, it stands to reason that these occupations, which require little formal education, will have many vacancies at any given point in time. To get a sense of the demand for workers over and above turnover levels, see the "hiring demand index" on page 7 of this report.

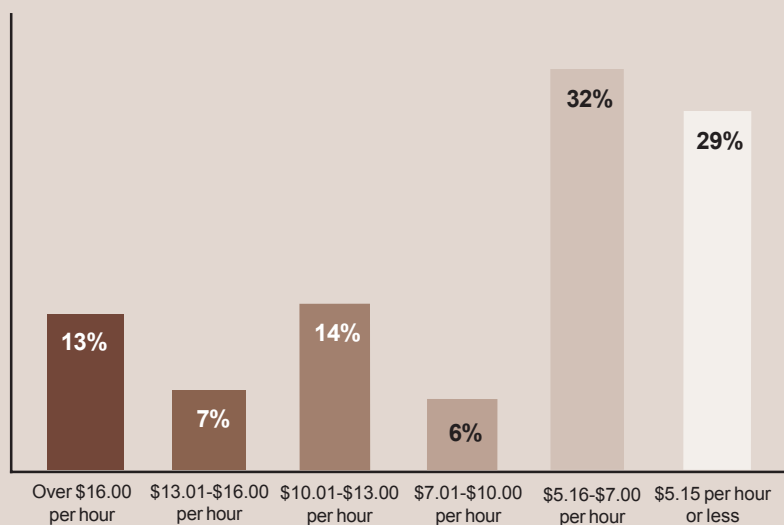
### How much experience do Alexandria job vacancies require?



### How much education do Alexandria job vacancies require?



### How much do Alexandria job vacancies pay?



### What is the difference between an *industry* and an *occupation*?

An industry is a group of businesses, categorized according to the goods and services they provide. An occupation is a group of workers, categorized according to the skills they have and what they do on the job. For example, *health care* is an industry that includes many occupations -- doctors, nurses, administrators, and secretaries, to name a few. But *secretary* is an occupation that can be found in almost any industry. Each industry contains a variety of occupations, and many occupations -- such as janitors, computer support professionals, and database analysts -- can be found in every industry.

# What did EMPLOYERS say?

Employers' Responses to the Open-Ended Question:

*"In trying to fill this position,  
what is the greatest difficulty you have faced, if any?"\**

Reported Difficulty	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
<i>"We have been unable to find qualified applicants."</i>	22	23.7%
<i>"Qualified applicants will not work for the compensation package we offer."</i>	4	4.3%
<i>"We have been unable to find applicants with the specific experience / training / skills / certification that we are seeking."</i>	11	11.8%
<i>"There is a shortage of people in this occupation."</i>	4	4.3%
<i>"[Some aspect of the job] is undesirable to applicants." (The position requires odd hours / the position is temporary / the position involves shift work)</i>	9	9.7%
<i>"The work ethic of people, once they are hired, is unacceptable." (People don't show up for work / if they do show up, they don't work / they can't pass drug tests)</i>	13	14.0%
<i>"Turnover - keeping people once they have been hired is the biggest problem."</i>	1	1.1%
No response	29	31.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100.1%</b>

\* Confidentiality concerns precluded publishing employers' verbatim responses. However, LDOL analysts reviewed all responses to the question above, grouped similar responses together, then re-worded the similar responses into one representative sentence or phrase, as shown above. Data shown in this table are unweighted. Percentages may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

Major Occupational Group	Number of Vacancies	Vacancy Rate	Hiring Demand Index*	Median Number of Days Position was Vacant
Food Preparation & Serving Related	427	5.23%	Average	60
Transportation & Material Moving	393	5.78%	High	7
Sales & Related	380	4.09%	High	7
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	194	2.74%	High	60
Management	174	3.23%	High	120
Construction & Extraction	113	1.95%	Low	180
Production	111	2.38%	High	15
Healthcare Support	82	2.29%	Low	14
Personal Care & Service	72	1.95%	Low	7
Office & Administrative Support	71	0.48%	Low	14
Building & Grounds Cleaning Maintenance	56	1.61%	Low	28
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	55	1.30%	Low	14
Protective Service	45	1.02%	High	7
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	35	6.14%	High	60
Architecture & Engineering	34	2.74%	High	5
Legal	32	4.85%	High	7
Business & Financial Operations	8	0.39%	Low	77
Non-Classifiable Operations	5	NA	NA	7
Community & Social Services	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Computer & Mathematical Science	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Education, Training & Library	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Life, Physical & Social Science	0	0.00%	NA	NA
<b>Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>2,290</b>	<b>2.35%</b>		<b>15</b>

Taking all the labor shortage indicators together (the vacancy rate, hiring demand index, and median number of days positions remained vacant), a number of occupations appeared likely to be experiencing moderate labor shortages. For example, Healthcare Practitioner & Technical occupations (the group that includes Registered Nurses) had a vacancy rate slightly above the overall average of 2.35 percent. It also scored *high* on the hiring demand index and positions remained vacant for a median 60 days -- quite a bit longer than the overall median of 15 days. Together, these indicators suggest that employers faced some difficulty in filling these positions.

\*The Hiring Demand Index indicates whether demand for workers in an occupational group is more than what we would expect from turnover levels alone. A "high" score on the Hiring Demand Index means that, all else equal, a labor shortage is **likely**, because there are more openings than we would expect to see from normal turnover alone. A "low" score means that a labor shortage is **unlikely**, because there are **not** more openings than we would expect to see from turnover alone. See the back cover of this report for more details on this measure.

Are there  
**LABOR SHORTAGES**  
 in Alexandria?



# FOR MORE INFORMATION

Second Quarter 2004 Job Vacancy Survey Findings are available for the state of Louisiana as well as all eight regional labor market areas (RLMAs). To order copies, or for more information, please contact the Louisiana Department of Labor's Research and Statistics Unit at (225) 342-3141, or toll-free at (888) 302-7662. You may also download any Job Vacancy Survey product from our Web site: [www.LAWORKS.net/qm\\_JVSoverview.asp](http://www.LAWORKS.net/qm_JVSoverview.asp).

## TECHNICAL NOTES

for the Second Quarter 2004  
Job Vacancy Survey

### THE SAMPLE

The Job Vacancy Survey was based on a random sample of Louisiana business establishments covered by Louisiana's unemployment insurance tax laws. The sample was stratified by firm size, region (including all eight regional labor market areas in Louisiana) and industry. This sample excludes certain types of establishments: small businesses with self-employed owners and some non-profit and religious organizations which are not covered by UI tax laws. In addition, the sample is limited to **private employers only**. **The vacancies reported in this study do not include openings with any federal, state, or local government entities in Louisiana.** The total sample size was 9,544. The overall response rate for this survey was 39.1%.

### JOB VACANCY RATES

Vacancy rates are computed as the number of vacancies in an occupation divided by the total employment in that occupation. A vacancy rate of five percent means that for every 100 jobs, five were vacant at the time of the survey.

### HIRING DEMAND INDEX

The Hiring Demand Index presented in this report measures demand for labor over and above the normal demand due to turnover. This measure, first constructed by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, is computed as follows:

(Job Vacancy Rate in the Occupation / Job Vacancy Rate in all occupations)

divided by

(Turnover rate in the occupation / Turnover rate in all occupations)

Job vacancy rates are calculated as discussed above, and national turnover rates were provided by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. They were calculated using Current Population Survey (CPS) Job Tenure Supplement microdata.

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